

UNDERHILL PLANNING COMMISSION

Thursday, June 13, 2019 @ 6:00 PM

Minutes

Attendance

Planning Commissioners:

Commissioner David Edson, Vice Chair
Commissioner Pat Lamphere
Commissioner John "Kail" Romanoff
Commissioner Val Stori
Commissioner Lea Van Winkle
Commissioner Sandy Wilmot

Jens Hilke, VT Fish & Wildlife Dept.

Mark Green, Development Review Board
Karen McKnight, Conservation Commission
Steve Webster, Energy Committee
Penny Miller, Development Review Board
Matt Chapek, Development Review Board
Betsy Chapek, Conservation Commission

Staff/Municipal Representatives:

Andrew Strniste, Planning Director

Others Present:

None

[5:55] Members of the Planning Commission started to convene at Underhill Town Hall around 5:55 pm.

[6:02] Vice Chair D. Edson, called the meeting to order. No public was in attendance to provide public comment. Conservation Commission Chair, Karen McKnight, introduced Jens Hilke, a representative from the State of Vermont, Fish & Wildlife Department, to inform the various Commissions and Boards about forest fragmentation, habitat blocks and related subjects.

AGENDA ITEM: PRESENTATION BY JENS HILKE (STATE OF VERMONT, DEPT. OF FISH & WILDLIFE): TOPICS OF DISCUSSION: OPEN SPACE PLANNING, FOREST FRAGMENTATION, WILDLIFE CONNECTIVITY, AND ACT 171

[6:05] Jens Hilke provided an overview of his background and his role with the State of Vermont as a Conservation Planning Biologist. He proceeded with his PowerPoint presentation. General discussion ensued about the following subjects:

- The economic value of conserving natural resources such as forests and rivers;
- Weighing priorities between private property rights and rights of the commons;
- Forest blocks in general and those that exist in Underhill, as well as the impact to them as they are reduced in size;
- The aquatic network in general and those that exist in Underhill;
- The impact development has on forest blocks and the aquatic network;
- The effects climate change will have on natural resources in Vermont;
- Conservation design and the Vermont Biofinder;
- Underhill being of high priority in regards to interior forest blocks;
- The importance of connected landscapes;
- Steps to take to strengthen the natural resources section of the Underhill Town Plan;
- The importance of physical landscape diversity;
- Riparian habitat;
- Wildlife crossings.

[7:00] Mr. Matt Chapek inquired about the ways to enhance wildlife crossings. A discussion ensued about restrictions currently in place that assist in preserving natural resources such as the 1500 ft. elevation development restriction. Ms. Penny Miller inquired about other Towns and actions that they have taken to enhance their natural resources section. Mr. Hilke provided an overview of the green book that he brought to the presentation. Discussion ensued about the effects of large scale sugaring, invasive species and Act 171. Mr. Hilke concluded by informing the Boards and Commissions of the various resources that he and his colleagues could provide to the Town.

[7:28] Commissioner Wilmot made a **motion to adjourn**. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Romanoff and **approved unanimously**.

Respectfully Submitted By:

Andrew Strniste, Planning Director

The minutes of the June 13, 2019 meeting were accepted this 25 day of JULY, 2019.



~~Johnathan Drew~~, Planning Commission Chair

David Edson

VICE